STORY OF THE SIGNAL CHANGE
ON THE
ENGLISH AND SCOTCH

THE STORY AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE UNITARIAN MOVEMENT

William George

BY

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PREFACE

THE Essex Hall Lecture was founded 1892 by the British and Foreign Unitarian Association to afford opportunity for exchange of ideas between sympathizers with religious progress, whether Unitarians or otherwise, and to deal especially with aspects of the history and development of Christianity.

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W. G. T.

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THE STORY AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE UNITARIAN MOVEMENT

INTRODUCTION

It is only a matter of industry to collect the principal events in the story of the Unitarian Movement, though even that task presents many a chance of slipping. The materials are abundant, if not universally accessible. But to arrange the facts in due 1*
perspective and proportion, and relate them to the general course of religious history, is quite another task, and a particularly formidable one when the future comes into the reckoning. Let me hope that where the following sketch falls short, as it must, its defects will suggest what is needed, and provoke an abler pen with an ampler page.

* The figures in the margin refer to the Notes on pages 96–104.

That the present time will hereafter be regarded as peculiarly interesting in a story which is assuredly far from closed, I cannot doubt; and if this be so, a fresh consideration of the subject is opportune. The twentieth century has brought a remarkable
2 development of international intercourse among Unitarians and other liberal Christians, and a friendliness towards them, approaching to a working alliance, on the part of some who would decline to be counted among 'the Unitarians,' but who evidently do not regard the Unitarian type of thought as beyond the bounds of religious sympathy and fellowship. That fact is in itself a striking testimony to the spread of an inclusive ideal which has always been cherished by the leaders of this Movement. From this opening of wider horizons may be expected, not only new courage and power, but also a richer religious consciousness. What seemed to be provincial, almost parochial, certainly isolated, finds itself more and more caught up into a powerful current, deep and wide, in the history of our times. This tide reflects

at different points different lights of feeling and sentiment, but it is substantially one. The great possibilities before such a Movement add fresh interest to the thrilling episodes of its past, and heighten the significance alike of its achievements and its failures.

It will be obvious, as my story proceeds, that in using the term 'Unitarian' I follow convenience rather than affect precision. In geology a group of closely allied strata, the limits of which cannot be strictly defined, occasionally derives its name from some one of the group which specially illustrates, or may even seem to exaggerate, features in some degree characteristic of all. It is so in regard to the very mingled and vaguely-edged elements before us; and if anyone would prefer a different nomenclature geological science affords a parallel for that phenomenon also: enough if the facts are admitted and their connections fairly exhibited. Obvious, again, is the reason for speaking here of a 'Movement,' and not of a 'Sect,' or a 'Church.' These latter terms imply a closer organic unity than the facts

warrant; while the term 'School of Thought' would neither suggest the practical pieties that claim our notice, nor convey adequately a sense of that distinctive 'mobility' which we cannot fail to see. If the term is criticized in the interests of a supposed fixed orthodoxy, one has but to ask where this appears in history. As we pass in thought from St. Paul to Origen, and thence to Augustine, Anselm, Thomas Aquinas, and the Vatican Decrees, we shall get a useful lesson in what Cardinal Newman called 'development.' Even the glacier moves, and it has no case against the freer progress of the river.

I. THE FIRST ADVANCE

I propose to bring a long and somewhat complex story into compassable view by fixing upon three dates exactly separated by centuries. They are the death-years of men whose justly celebrated names will recall distinct and important stages of our story's progress, and without a knowledge of those stages no intelligent comprehension of the

present position is possible. The first of these dates is 1604. In that year died *Faustus Socinus*, a man whose name has been widely attached to the whole Movement—for reasons good or bad. Let us imagine him looking back, before he passes, at the century preceding his death, the century of the Reformation.

When that period opened, whatever indications there might be of coming changes of Christian thought, certain propositions appeared to be generally unquestionable. The absolute authority of the Church, the impossibility of salvation outside her communion, and the impiety of rejecting her teaching—especially as to the Trinity of co-equal and co-eternal Persons in the Godhead, the substitutionary Atonement, and the miraculous sacraments—nobody, who wished to continue anybody, dared openly deny. When the reformers first set out, they only sought to reform, not to reconstruct. They were far from being radicals either as churchmen or theologians. The grounds of their revolt were moral and

religious rather than doctrinal. Only the logic of events led them on through a period of ferment and free-thought to a period of creed-making intended to keep speculation within proper limits.

An undercurrent of heretical opinion had, indeed, existed for centuries past. How serious its character and dimensions were in the regard of the authorities at Rome must be judged by the adoption, toward the close of the twelfth century, of that policy of extirpation by fire and sword which was at first specially directed against the heretics of Toulouse in particular, and the Waldenses in general, and in this district, it is said, the
3 orthodox doctrines of the Trinity and of baptismal regeneration were even at that time widely denied. Now it is interesting to observe that, as soon as the news of Martin Luther's revolt spread abroad, these same heresies broke out afresh in many parts of Western Europe. The 'Re-baptizers' or 'Anabaptists,' who then made themselves conspicuous, sometimes ominously, but whose excesses are usually more emphasized in

history than their many virtues, were from the first charged with 'Arianism'—a vague term covering, no doubt, many varieties of anti-trinitarian opinion. The genuine Arianism of old, the view that the Son of God was, like the Holy Spirit, a subordinate being, dependent for existence on the will of the Father, 'the Most High God,' finds its best modern reflection, not in the early stages of Unitarian development, but in the English Church and Dissent of the eighteenth century. The truth appears to be that the chief aim of many of the reforming communities who were charged with this form of heretical opinion was, not to be expert theologians, but to seek a simple brotherly Christian life, according to the Bible, and under the guidance of the indwelling Spirit. They find a modern parallel in the Doukhobors, who were recently driven from Russia, and sought a home in Canada. It is true that a 'Scripture standard' generally fails to reach the requirements of dogmatic theology, and plain Bible readers have always been prone to miss the way to Athanasian orthodoxy; but these

primitive minded people imagined that the Gospel would keep them safe for time and eternity. Unfortunately they supplied the earliest victims to the fires of persecution in this country, as well as in Holland and Switzerland; but to this day the 'Mennonites' who flourish in Holland, Germany, and the United States of America, preserve in their title the honoured name of their leader
4 in that age, *Menno Simons*—a brave pioneer of a Christianity free from the bondage of creeds, who for his own part certainly had no sympathy with anti-trinitarian opinions, but whose principles have prepared the way for the Unitarian Christianity of many of his Dutch followers. Even in the seventeenth century they were broadly spoken of as *indocti Sociniani*.

While the Baptists were chiefly drawn from the humbler ranks of society, a remarkable symptom of the age appeared in quite another quarter. In the bosom of the Catholic Church, close to its very heart, was found a group of scholarly and refined men and women, dominated by no one great mind,

but conferring freely—if secretly—upon the vital truths of Christianity. Their aim, too, was the deepening of the religious life; but minds like theirs must probe to the rational roots of things, and they must have soon discovered themselves to be at variance with the teaching of the Church upon such subjects as the Trinity and the Atonement. In this cultured Italian group, among some thirty or forty names of significance, we find those of members of the *Socinus* family. As time went on the trend of their thought could not be mistaken. Their liberty was obviously in danger from the Inquisition, and one by one these Latin Reformers, whose temper and culture clearly distinguish them from the Teutonic group, escaped across the Alps. Some were able to settle definitely in Switzerland, Germany, or Holland; others, like Lælius Socinus, uncle of Faustus, journeyed to many countries in turn, bearing their profound questionings and suggestions with them.

Among these fugitives was the eloquent preacher Ochino, who was prominent for

a time among those foreigners for whom the 'Strangers' Church' was founded in Austin Friars by permission of Edward VI, and reconstituted under Elizabeth. Doubtless such visitors, as well as the Baptizers from Holland, helped to quicken native English tendencies to anti-trinitarian thought. The influence of the Italian Reformers was, however, much more distinctly exhibited in Switzerland, where at one time the churches seemed to be on the eve of adopting collectively a non-trinitarian theology. But the more orthodox Protestant leaders were alert. As early as 1539 Melanchthon, referring to the Italian danger, warned the Catholic authorities at Venice against 'Servetianism'; and now, in the middle of the century, Calvin and the rest would allow no quarter to its representatives in any degree. Hence their flight again—this time to Poland and Transylvania.

In that century Poland was a greater country than modern readers are apt to remember; and, besides enjoying political and commercial eminence, it was the home

of much intellectual activity. We may usefully remember that Copernicus himself, whose name is no less significant to theologians than to scientists, lived at Thorn, in a Polish province which was not annexed to the kingdom of Prussia till the partition of 1772. The keen, not to say violent, interest taken by the Poles in religious questions led at that time to strongly marked divisions; and the needs of the situation co-operated with a racial passion for liberty to secure a declaration of freedom of the Press in 1539, and another of equal rights for Catholics and Protestants in 1572.

Seven years before this last decree some of the Anabaptist churches adopted an anti-trinitarian basis, and in 1572 they issued a 'Confession.' The bitterness ensuing between this group and the other Protestants of various types was extreme. Even those who seemed most akin rejected all overtures from these Unitarians.

Sixteen years after the death of his uncle, the gentle and accomplished Lælius, in 1562, Faustus Socinus made his way to the 'Polish

Brethren,' as they came later to be called. During the next quarter of a century he toiled among them, gradually winning their trust and convincing their minds on matters theological and ecclesiastical. Ultimately some four or five hundred Unitarian congregations were formed, for the most part imbued with his peculiar religious ideas. Men of rank and ability belonged to them; scholarly writers discussed the various Confessions of the age and elaborated the system they desired to substitute. In 1602 a university was founded at Racow which became celebrated for the excellence of its instruction, and attracted the youth of all sects and parties. It was thence, just after the
6 death of Socinus, that the famous Racovian Catechism was issued, embodying his teachings though not wholly compiled by himself.

A detailed account of Socinus's doctrines is unnecessary here, but we should if possible grasp his leading ideas in order to understand Unitarianism in its first organized type. A secondary advantage will be that when we remember what Socinianism really was we

shall see the absurdity of speaking of nineteenth century Unitarians (as Carlyle did, for instance, of James and Harriet Martineau) as 'Socinians.' Joseph Priestley, it is true, did not object to the name, but however much he honoured the old leader, he did not really share his peculiar Christology; and it would be hard (I think) to find anyone now who does. With all Protestants, against the Catholics, Socinus appealed to the Bible in place of tradition and Church authority. Against Protestants and Catholics he believed in the unbought benevolence of God. Against both, he repudiated as unscriptural and unreasonable the doctrine of Three co-essential and co-eternal Persons in the Godhead. To him, as to St. Paul, there was but 'one God, the Father,' whose goodwill to his creatures rendered impossible their predestination to damnation, and needless the offer of an infinite 'satisfaction' to secure the pardon of sinners. Their way to forgiveness lay through true contrition; and the assurance of this blessed truth came to man—otherwise benighted and stumbling—

through the revelation brought by Jesus Christ, a revelation guaranteed by signs and wonders, and preserved for subsequent ages in the Scriptures. The eminent merits of the man Jesus had been signally approved by the Father, who conferred divinity—though not deity—upon him, in virtue of which exaltation he was fitly an object of devout adoration. Add to these views a disposition to minimize the essentials of Christian fellowship, so that he was ready to unite fraternally with Catholics and Arians, and a wide toleration in regard to most matters of opinion, and we have probably a sufficient notion of the earnest, if also dry and unpoetic, mind of Faustus Socinus. Much that he wrote no longer commands assent, but his criticisms of the 'satisfaction' theory of the Atonement have always remained valid, and are only repeated in new forms from generation to generation by those who reject that doctrine as dishonouring God and misrepresenting the moral experience of man.

Among the crowding memories of the

veteran's closing days two events must have stood out in painful prominence. One was the death of *Michael Servetus* fifty years 7
before, the other that of *Francis Dávid* in 1579. All the world has heard of the former tragedy, and how, as an impugner of the Trinity, the solitary, brilliantly imaginative, if erratic, Spaniard was consigned to the flames by Calvin—in order (apparently) to prove that Rome was not alone in daring the worst extremity in defence of the purity of the faith. More grateful to mention is the fact that the Geneva of to-day has erected monuments to each, not ignoring the fatal mistakes of the past, but recognizing the services that each in his way rendered in the age-long struggle for goodness and truth.

But, it may be asked, did not Faustus Socinus himself exhibit the persecutor's instinct in the matter of Francis Dávid, the first bishop and great hero-martyr of the Transylvanian Unitarians? For his own part he strenuously denied it, and impartial history acquits him of actual share in Dávid's trial; yet a painful feeling must be acknow-

ledged as we recall the story. Dávid, till middle life a Catholic, then briefly a reformer of the Lutheran and Genevan types in succession, became a Unitarian under the influence of Biandrata, one of the Italian fugitives to whom reference has been made. Very soon, however, the pupil outran his teacher, coming to the conclusion that if, as he held, Jesus is man and not God, it is improper to worship him. As in Geneva, so here; even heresy has an orthodoxy. This Transylvanian heretic among the heretics must be confuted, and Biandrata sent for Socinus to help him in the work. A weary winter was spent in unsuccessful argument; ultimately a conference referred the dispute to the civil ruler, who promptly sent Dávid to the prison of Déva, on the charge of infringing the terms of toleration. Here a few months later he died. Socinus expressed no grief for his fate; and the sad fact remains that a humanitarian view of Jesus was the rock on which the new policy of Unitarian toleration suffered shipwreck in the first years of the Movement.

A brighter fact in the record is connected with these Transylvanians. 'First in all the world,' says the pious Bishop Ferencz, their aged leader to-day, they maintained the rights of conscience to fullest liberty. In 1568, Prince John Sigismund, the only Unitarian sovereign recorded in modern history, issued a law conferring religious freedom upon all sects. Unitarian Christianity was thenceforward for half a century a recognized 'state-church'; and the contrast is striking between the generous toleration allowed during its supremacy and the bigotry and persecution exhibited by other 'state-churches' in later centuries. At that time the Transylvanian Unitarian congregations numbered over four hundred—about the same as the Polish. It was the early spring-time of Unitarianism in Europe, but wintry storms soon wrought havoc with its fair promise. Socinus himself suffered violence, riots broke out repeatedly, political complications were added to religious strife, and after generations of disaster Polish Unitarianism was blotted out in 1660, only to be followed

later on by the destruction of Poland itself. Transylvanian Unitarianism survived, but so as by fire, after undergoing hardships sufficient to kill a less genuine faith. To draw conclusions adverse to the inherent qualities of Socinianism as a religious force would be obviously unfair.

II. PREPARATION FOR THE SECOND ADVANCE

With the name of the Englishman, *John*
9 *Locke*, who died in 1704, we are introduced to a very different aspect of this Movement. No founder of churches, no organizer of societies, not even the leader of a theological party, an independent thinker quickening the thoughts of others, his is precisely the figure to keep in our mind's eye as we consider the development of Unitarianism in this country. For it did not come here 'with observation,' as a sudden, clear, and decisive birth of religious life. For generations its advent depended on the efforts, tentative and almost private, of isolated men. Starting from different points, and by no means reaching

the same goals, these solitary influences resulted in a composite tendency the true magnitude of which few appear to have realized. How it came about that a force so massive was checked and diverted so as to leave upon history a mark so comparatively slight may be seen as we proceed. For the present let us look back, as if with John Locke himself, over this period of slowly developing thought, and then we shall be better prepared to consider the features of his and the following generations.

(*a*) The records of the sixteenth century tell of a number of so-called ' Arian ' martyrs in this country, and more or less vague references to the existence here of anti-trinitarian opinion are found in the literature of the last half of that century. Midway in Elizabeth's time something like a concentration of this opinion was discovered in the Eastern counties, whether due wholly to immigration of Dutch heretics or not. A clergyman and three others were burned at Norwich in the course of ten years (1579–1589). Under James I, in the spring of 1612, the same cruel

fate befell Bartholomew Legate and the twice-burnt Edward Wightman, the former at Smithfield, the latter at Lichfield—both suffering as deniers of the Trinity. It was not the fault of the Presbyterians of the middle of the seventeenth century that similar events did not stain the annals of the Commonwealth. The record that when, as late as 1677, the Act 'De Hæretico Comburendo' (passed in 1401 to please the Church authorities) was repealed, 'all the Bishops but one' opposed the repeal, would be even more shocking were it as true in spirit as in form. I hope and think their opposition was but technical; nevertheless the bitter treatment dealt out to even the orthodox Nonconformists is undeniable. We may expect, therefore, but little in the way of overt, still less of organized Unitarianism in this period. Despite all odds, however, the evidence is overwhelming that Socinian, Arian, or other forms of anti-trinitarian thought were unceasingly and widely diffused. How did this come about?

With the preceding history in mind, and

especially recalling the acute scholarship and vigour of the first Socinian group and of the later 'Polish Brethren,' whose writings preserved in eight goodly volumes are a monu- 11
ment of the earnestness and power of the old Unitarianism, we naturally and properly attribute much to their influence. Their printing-press was kept constantly busy, not out of pure missionary zeal alone, but as a defence against the fierce opposition of the Jesuits, now flushed with the triumphs of the Counter-Reformation. With their Catholic foes were allied the orthodox Protestants who did not foresee that in rooting out Socinian liberty they were but too surely destroying their own. In 1638 the famous Socinian University of Racow was abolished, and in 1660, as I have said, the Unitarians were banished from Poland altogether. A considerable number found refuge with the Transylvanian Unitarians as a separate body; others sheltered with difficulty in East Prussia, where in the course of generations they slowly dwindled away; and some were received grudgingly by the Hollanders,

who allotted to them a domicile in their coldest and most inhospitable districts. At least this was better than burning them. Under pressure of this continual persecution individual Poles appear to have come westward in a pretty constant stream. Some found their way to England. Thus by personal conference, as well as by the printed page, the Socinian seed was widely scattered.

The Racovian Catechism, mentioned above, was first issued in 1605; a German translation appeared in 1608; and in 1609 a Latin translation was sent to London, dedicated to James I—of all persons on earth! A king who sent Unitarians in person to the flames could have little scruple about burning the book, and burnt it was by royal command in 1614. Another German edition had been issued two years before. In 1651 the Latin was reprinted. The year after came forth an English revision apparently due to the intrepid John Bidle. Further Latin and Dutch editions appeared in the next twenty or thirty years; and some writers who realized its importance and sought to confute it

naturally gave it wider currency when they incorporated it with their own replies. I need not recount the dates when it was ordered to be burned by the common hangman. But in connection with these burning tactics a rather interesting little incident is told that reveals much, and it is specially significant when the early date is considered. Gerard Brandt, the historian of the Reformation in Holland, relates that a solemn decree had been issued banishing certain Unitarian propagandists and ordering the burning of their books in their presence before they quitted the country. On the day appointed for the burning an expectant crowd gathered round the pile of combustibles to see the solemn sport; but when the executioner looked about for the condemned books they had mysteriously disappeared. The magistrates, says the historian, being curious to learn their contents, 'had quietly divided them among themselves and their friends.' This was so early as 1598. 12

This naughty, if not strictly 'official,' curiosity of the magistrates was clearly not

confined to themselves. We can readily imagine their desire, of course not to preserve horrid opinions from destruction, but at least to see what and how horrid they were. The like disposition, doubtless, moved the minds of zealous Puritans here and there in England, and their Cavalier opponents were probably less deterred by pious scruples. As for the prevalent moods of the public in Restoration times nothing need be said. Whatever the means employed or the temper of the age, it is certain that in spite of direst threats the heretical literature was surreptitiously procured, passed about, and read. Complaints that this was so arose continually from zealous orthodox writers. Among the suspected purveyors were University men. Students, an ever-hardy race and prone to innovations, evidently had a hand in it.
13 There was no English coterie, indeed, so bold as to imitate that very interesting set at the University of Altorf, in Bavaria, who in the early years of the century, under the influence of Sohner, their professor, sedulously studied and secretly diffused the forbidden opinions,

having a code of fictitious names for Unitarian writers and books, and thus for a time eluding the vigilance of the authorities. It is significant in several ways to observe that the name by which Francis Dávid, the humanitarian, was known among these 'Crypto-Unitarians,' was *Desiderius Erasmus*. This nest of heretics was crushed in, or soon after, 1617, and those who escaped formed part of the underground missionary forces to which reference has been made. In 1640 both Houses of Convocation passed a series of Canons to regulate, were it possible, the many irregularities visible to them in the religious world about them. The Fourth Canon is trenchant against all Socinians and diffusers of the 'damnable and cursed heresy of Socinianism,' and specially threatens with penalties University men guilty of disseminating it. But neither the burnings of books nor the threatened burnings of men checked the growth of opinion, or the supply of literature. Andrew Marvell roundly declared thirty years later that one could buy Socinian books as readily as the Bible. Prevented

from appearing at the surface the heresy only made more root.

But, large as its influence was, we must not credit the imported Socinianism with everything. Home-born tendencies were evidently at work. John Bidle, famous as the first anti-trinitarian preacher in London, declared in the middle of the century that he had arrived at his own views before seeing any Socinian book. John Knowles, apparently the first Unitarian preacher in England (at Chester, prior to 1650) said about 1670 he had never seen a Socinian book. A quarter of a century later John Locke, when accused of Socinianism, made a similar disclaimer. We are reminded of the testimony of Peirce of Exeter that before he came into those parts, say 1713, there were 'some few' who had become unorthodox 'by only reading their Bibles'; and of Blanco White's independently developed Unitarianism of a century later, and, indeed, that of men innumerable with whom (as Dr.
14 Martineau says) the Bible itself has been a powerful 'unorthodox influence.' But if we

had not the direct evidence of these home-born tendencies to English Unitarianism the doctrinal forms it took would prove that Socinus's Socinianism was not the fountain of them all.

Among the writers of that period who undoubtedly owed much to Socinian ideas [15] —on the Atonement and on toleration at least—were Falkland, Hales, and Chillingworth, the celebrated pioneers of a true Broad Church policy. Their intense dislike of sectarian quibbles, and their large-hearted love of religious liberty, are all in the spirit of Socinus; and their works laid a foundation upon which Jeremy Taylor, Baxter, and Locke himself, more successfully laboured in the interests of toleration. That even the latest of these lovers of inclusion could not fully persuade their contemporaries was due to the same misguided zeal and narrowness of mental vision as had defeated Socinus's efforts a hundred years before.

Two more streams of tendency must be observed before we can fully gauge the possibilities of religious development in John

Locke's time. To note the importance of the first we must look back; to see the significance of the second we must come down below Locke's generation.

It is well known that, in the Reformation times, after the first outburst of new thought, extremely various and sometimes boldly venturesome, there came a period of erecting safeguards against the excesses of lawless opinion. Two principal types of creed emerged, first that of the Lutheran churches, mostly found in northern Germany, Denmark, and Scandinavia; second, the Reformed, or Calvinistic, which prevailed in Switzerland, France, the Netherlands, and Great Britain—especially in Scotland. A third type of less magnitude, but of much significance as preparing for the growth of liberal opinion, was the Zwinglian, whose home was German Switzerland. As it was with Calvin himself that the pioneer Unitarians of the Italian school came into deadliest conflict, so in the generations following it was against the type of theology associated with his name that the Unit-

arianizing impulse chiefly turned. The first field of battle was in Holland, where, as we have often seen, Socinian influences found favourable ground, though even there they were long and stoutly opposed. Among the scholarly and thoughtful men who made a more or less sympathetic study of the Unitarian books were some who in the end distinctly espoused the Unitarian position; others, without going so far, were still unmistakably affected, and wavered significantly from the strict standards of Calvinism. *Arminius*, whose name became associated with a very pregnant, though at first apparently slight, departure in theology, appears to have been one of the latter group; but *Vorstius*, his successor at the University of [16] Leyden, was long accused of Socinian affinities and died confessedly an antitrinitarian. In 1610, the year when he became head of the University, he published a work, 'De Deo,' which by the direction of King James had the special distinction of being publicly burned the year after at Oxford and Cambridge, as well as in London.

The King went farther and wrote a 'Confutation' of him; and, farther yet, sent a remonstrance to the Dutch against tolerating such a heretic. Obtuse to this royal hint they endured Vorstius a few years more, in which he endeavoured to defend his views; but in the end they expelled him from his post and banished him from the country.

That was easy to do, but to expel 'Arminianism,' with its latent potencies, was by no means so easy. We may roughly summarize its principles by saying it exonerates the Deity from the imputation of inscrutable cruelty involved in the doctrine of predestination, and relieves man from the burden of a supposed inheritance of guilt and depravity from which he is absolutely powerless to free himself. In both respects it departed from the Genevan orthodoxy, and approached the Polish heresy. A large number of the Dutch clergy, sympathizing with these views, entered their 'Remonstrance' against the prevailing Calvinism.

They were in consequence driven from office, their views were condemned at the

Synod of Dort in 1619, and their leaders subsequently suffered much. But the protesting Remonstrants have always maintained [17]
their protest, and they still flourish in Holland, including in their numbers many decided and active Unitarians. Already as the seventeenth century advanced the Dutch Arminians exhibited Arian tendencies, as is proved by the writings, e.g., of Episcopius and Limborch, the latter being one of Locke's friends and correspondents.

It is, however, with Arminianism in England that we are now specially concerned; and strangely enough, we must notice that the very people who welcomed most readily the rising dawn of a kindlier theology for the most part leaned in politics to the side of absolutism. It was unfortunately the champions of democratic self-government who, being saturated with Calvinism, passed the notorious Ordinance of 1648, by which every denier of the Trinity should have been put to death. The way to latitude first opened before the Arminians, and latitude was soon found to have no secure fence

against the coming-in of Unitarian thought.

The second stream of tendency is associated with the name of Herbert—not that gentle and devout poet to whom the epithet 'holy' has been given, but his brother who is known as 'of Cherbury.' With this writer began a long series whose names stretch onward for a century and a half or more—names for the most part held in abhorrence by the serious minds of their own times,
18 and by the ignorantly prejudiced of later years—but in their varied ranks including some of the most earnest, as well as the keenest, critics of the Scriptures and Christianity. They protested repeatedly but vainly against the imputation of irreligion which was put upon them because they rejected dogmatic theology and pleaded for what they called 'natural religion.' The tone of some was occasionally flippant, their Christianity was often no deeper than that of their contemporaries, their critical apparatus was slender; but these 'Deists' and 'free-thinkers' undoubtedly counted among the forces that broke down the traditional

defences of orthodoxy, and opened the way to a wider outlook upon the life and destiny of mankind. The opinions of some of them would be considered entirely reasonable and moderate to-day.

The few bold spirits who stood out publicly in England as defenders of an anti-trinitarian form of Christianity deserve to be recorded, though it may be more for their single-hearted devotion than for the special merit of their doctrinal opinions. Daring the risks and bearing the penalties of religious pioneers in those perilous days, they took no unworthy part in preparing for a farther and more general movement. *Paul Best*, a cultured and travelled gentleman, brought home his heresy from Poland and Transylvania; *John Bidle*, an Oxford tutor 19
and a Gloucester schoolmaster, first (as we have seen) became heretical through reading his Bible. Both these men would have been put to death but for Cromwell's religious liberalism. *John Knowles*, also of Gloucester, had gathered an anti-trinitarian congregation at Chester by the year 1650, and

Bidle opened a church in London in 1652, which was closed by authority two years later. Bidle's dauntless energy found scope in ceaseless industry in translating Socinian works and in preparing original writings. After his sixth imprisonment he died, in the year 1662, repeating to himself 'The work is done.' His work was well done. Its impression lay indelibly through a long life upon the mind of a plain London citizen, *Thomas Firmin*, whose integrity, liberality, and intelligent interest in theology well entitle him to his shining position as the first of the long and noble list of Unitarian laymen. Unflinching in attachment to his own religious opinions, his charity was wide and generous, not only towards his poorer fellow-citizens in the time of the Plague and the Great Fire, but especially towards all who suffered from oppression—Calvinistic Huguenots, driven from France by the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, Irish Presbyterians, and Episcopalians fleeing from the Stuart armies in Ireland, and even those very Protestants of Poland who

a little while before had been active in the banishment of their Unitarian countrymen, but who were in turn banished through the efforts of the Jesuits. What effect his religious views may have had on the many clergy in high places who were among his friends is doubtful; but his services to the cause that Bidle taught him to love are manifest. It was through his enterprise and generosity that a famous series of 'Unitarian Tracts,' began toward the close of the century, the six volumes of which bear witness to the diligence and ability with which the Unitarian writers, avowed or anonymous, criticized the current orthodox literature.

Alongside of what may be called the 'central line' of Unitarian advance occurred distinct manifestations of anti-trinitarian thought in the ranks of the General Baptists, Independents, and Quakers; and it is interesting to observe that some of these anticipated, at least in outspokenness, the more extensive heterodoxy that is associated with that peculiar branch of Nonconformity,

the English Presbyterians. By the close of the seventeenth century, it appears, some of these, at least, were in the habit of holding meetings in London along with known Unitarians. We may note here that separate Unitarian worship was not only against the law but also contrary to the desires of the Unitarians of that day. Firmin contemplated assemblages of Unitarians only as fraternities within the Church.

But an important, if small, addition to the anti-trinitarian forces in England, brought by a few of those Huguenots who found refuge here, calls our attention to countries beyond. The influences which had thus far modified the Calvinism of French Protestantism were at work more distinctly in Switzerland. Even in the middle of the seventeenth century the rigour of the Genevan rule was resisted, and towards the close of the century the revolt became marked. Jean Alphonse Turretini, professor at Geneva, developed a keen interest in 'natural re-
21 ligion,' breaking with the scholasticism of the earlier generation. Seeking, in the spirit

of Socinus, to reduce the number of essentials, and to cherish friendly relations between all the churches, he was eminent in a victory of the year 1706, securing liberty from doctrinal subscription—a liberty of which we now begin to hear much. Switzerland, having thus led the way, went a step farther in 1725, when it ventured to depose Calvin's Catechism from the position of supreme authority, and placed that venerable document below the Scriptures; the significance of such a decision need not be emphasized. All but one of the Dutch Mennonite preachers we may note, refused to make a Trinitarian Confession in 1722.

In Germany at this period there were a few conspicuous anti-trinitarians; but the most significant facts in this connection were collateral rather than direct. For instance, there was a distinct reaction against extreme 'creed-worship,' and amongst the results was the rise of a 'Pietism' resembling that which gave birth to the *Imitatio Christi* and the *Theologia Germanica* centuries before. The key-note of this typically German

Christianity was found in the still valued works of Johann Arndt, especially that entitled *Vom wahren Christenthum* (1605); but its most effectual apostle was Spener, a man
22 of singular worth and ability, in whose writings the watchful authorities detected no fewer than two hundred and fifty heretical propositions. In Holland and elsewhere the field seemed white unto harvest—if we might rely (as I am afraid we must not altogether) on the recorded opinion of Peter
23 Bayle, who noticing the diffusion of Unitarian ideas far and wide, though in obscurity, said 'It is thought that, as things now are, Europe would soon be surprised at finding itself Socinian if powerful princes should embrace this heresy, or if they should only enact that its profession should be relieved of the temporal disabilities it labours under.' As a matter of history we know that neither alternative occurred. In the Act of Toleration of 1689 no liberty was granted to write or preach against the Trinity; and to make assurance doubly sure a special Act was passed in 1698, chiefly (I am afraid) through

the urgency of orthodox Dissenters, penalizing Unitarians with civil disabilities for a first offence, and with three years' imprisonment for a second. This was the answer to Locke's noble plea for toleration to all who would simply admit that Jesus was the Messiah. The Act was not repealed till 1813. [24]

Now it may with entire reasonableness be urged that all this kind of evidence, of which I have adduced but a part, respecting the diffusion of Socinian or anti-trinitarian opinions, warrants no very sure conclusions. It may be said, very truly, that in all communities there will be a certain number who from a desire for what is novel, or out of mere levity, will take up any eccentricity suggested, whether in the world of thought or of practice. Supposing every possible abatement to be made on this consideration, however, I cannot but think that much of what we have seen bears witness to a real and serious growth of thought. But if doubts still remain as to this, if the notorious flexibility of average popular opinion is fully borne in mind, are there not proofs to

hand of a very different character? If we were asked to name the three greatest minds in England at that time, should we be wrong in fixing upon the authors respectively of *Paradise Lost*, the *Principia*, and the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*? John Milton, Isaac Newton, John Locke form a group of geniuses of which any country and any age might be proud. Whatever be said of the unskilful and shallow multitude, the profound intelligence of these three is beyond question, and be it observed each was as devoutly religious as he was intelligent. If the concurrence of three such minds counts for anything it proves conclusively that at least some, and it may be many, of the deepest thinkers of that age were seriously alienated from the old dogma, and each in his own way was feeling towards a Christianity that would gain in spiritual power the more it accorded with, and not bluntly confounded, our rational judgments. That Milton, Newton, and Locke were distinctly opposed to the Athanasian dogma of the Trinity, and heterodox on other points, is shown by their

own writings—in each case, very significantly, writings not published in their lifetime. One brilliant example of a more resolute spirit is shown in Algernon Sidney, who paid at the block the penalty of his political and theological daring.

(*b*) The old dogma, then, was entrenched, apparently beyond possibility of falling by assault. But what, in sober earnest, did the old dogma mean? The era of rationalism had begun; could the doctrine of the Trinity possibly be rationalized? That was the question that began to agitate the Church in earnest a few years before Locke's death; 26
and the results at least show the extreme difficulty of being sound upon this subject. Dr. Bury, Rector of Exeter College, ventured to publish a book in the interests of the simple Christian gospel, which he appears not altogether to have adorned, urging that speculations about the Incarnation are not necessary, and are certainly dangerous. The usual prescription was ordered, and Dr. Bury's book was burned by decree of the University. But

one of Firmin's Unitarian friends (apparently Le Clerc, born in Switzerland, domiciled in Holland, and notoriously Socinian) so adroitly 'defended' the theory of Dr. Bury's book that eager champions rushed in to support the doctrine of the creeds. Unfortunately they disagreed fatally as to what that doctrine was. Dr. Sherlock, Master of the Temple, explained that the Three Persons of the Trinity are not in 'one numerical substance,' but in 'one undivided substance,' which is sufficiently vague. But not content with vagueness, he further explained that they were 'three distinct infinite beings, minds, spirits, and persons'; each 'is God,' 'nay, each of them singly is *a* God.' This, as every one saw at once, looked uncommonly like sheer tritheism. But Dr. Wallis, the aged Savilian professor of mathematics, offered appropriately a mathematical explanation. Has not a cube length, breadth, and height? And yet they are not three cubes. No, said Dr. Jane, naturally enough; but then nobody ever said length, breadth, or height is a *cube*; whereas each Person *is*

said to be 'God.' Then the witty and intolerant Dean of Westminster, Dr. South, fell upon the Master of the Temple, and smote him hip and thigh. His own explanation was that each Person was just a 'mode' of the Divine essence. Despite the clearly heretical savour of this 'modalism,' Dr. South was so confident that he preached before the University urging the authorities to issue a condemnation of 'Deism, Socinianism, and Tritheism, lest they should fall from ecclesiastical grace, and the door of preferment should be shut against them.' Thus the accredited guardians of orthodoxy oscillated between one form of deadly error and another, the keen Unitarians meanwhile not failing in their 'Tracts' to exhibit the absolute insecurity of the dogma, and to point the moral. The debate lasted long and must have provoked many searchings of heart which resulted by and by in the notoriously widespread Arianism of the Church of the next quarter of a century. Archbishop Tillotson, one of Firmin's friends, said wearily of the Athanasian Creed, 'I wish we were well

rid of it'; but being part of the Church's most august instruments, and the Church itself being maintained by law, there the Creed was—and there it is to this day. For the end of the controversy (though not of the difficulty) was that William III told the clergy to refrain from further discussion, or if they must preach on the subject they must adhere to Scripture, the Creeds, and the Articles. Once more thought was stifled, and the dead weight of authority prevented that stride forward, which appeared as possible as it was desirable, towards a freer, simpler, and more vital Christianity.

That men could move forward rapidly is strikingly shown in the case of a very important belief which was held practically by all men in that century, and held far more vividly than any other theological dogma is ever likely to be. It was assuredly a theological belief, but it did not happen to be included among those declared necessary to salvation. It rested on a Scripture warrant as clear and unequivocal as that for the Trinity is vague, dubious, and inferential

at the best. The voice of the Church had guaranteed it from the earliest ages. If the famous test—*Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*—ever applied it did here. It was ' proved ' not only by texts but by overwhelming evidence in numberless courts of law. Never was this belief so vehemently or so ably defended by literature, never so emphatically asserted by law, as in the very age of which we are speaking. And yet within the lifetime of one generation that belief melted away in the atmosphere of simple rationalism; and the laws based on that belief, laws under which multitudes of poor creatures had a few decades before died a miserable death, were almost silently repealed. It was the belief in demoniacal agency through witchcraft. The candid [27] reader of Lecky's account of this amazing change of opinion will not narrowly limit the possibility of other theological changes—when only the way lies open. If the Church had unfortunately happened to make salvation dependent upon adhering to this long-held and once universally sanctioned opinion,

who will say that we should not still be drowning ugly old women on the accusation of spiteful neighbours ?

Locke, 'the Socinus of his age' (as Principal Gordon has called him) pleaded for 'Reasonableness.' The century that leads up to *Joseph Priestley*, the third Socinus, if any such there were, is marked by the attempt to be 'Reasonable' in religion. Priestley died in 1804, by which time a newly organized development of Unitarian Christianity was becoming manifest. This is the closing stage of the 'preparation period.' Let us see what steps led to it, and what has followed.

The sons of the Puritans, denied a place in a truly national church, reluctantly built their meeting-houses at the close of the seventeenth century and the opening of the eighteenth. In a few years, indeed, a large number quietly conformed; and the rest continued their protest in no encouraging circumstances. So far as doctrinal or ecclesiastical views went there was no general

difference at that date between Independents and Presbyterians. In fact the attempt was made, though soon given up, to amalgamate their forces. Under the terms of the Toleration settlement their preachers were required to subscribe all the Thirty-nine Articles except those that dealt simply with church government and organization. It would seem that the barrier to advancing opinion was complete. But, remarkably enough, the first decisive steps in an advance that had far-reaching consequences were taken, not in the apparently more open field of dissent, but within the rigid bounds of the Church itself. William Whiston, Boyle Lecturer in 1707, a prolific writer whose translation of Josephus was long popular, concluded from his anti-Nicene studies that the Arian 28
view was the true one; and, though he ultimately left the Church, his writings evidently had considerable effect upon both clergy and laity. But Dr. Samuel Clarke did not leave the Church, and within its borders during many years he carried on with varying fortune a battle for what *he* called

a 'Scriptural Trinity,' but which his opponents called plain Arianism. He was a man of extraordinary mental power—Voltaire called him a 'reasoning mill'; and he left a specially notable mark upon his age in the expurgated liturgical forms adopted from him by bold clergymen within the establishment, and with more propriety by the Arian Dissenters.

For things came to this at last, that 'Ariomania' broke out in many Dissenting circles, and the disease, if disease it were, obstinately refused to be cured. The Unitarian leaven had not existed in vain, and the attempt to prove against the Deists and 'natural religion' party, that Christianity is really 'reasonable' brought men amongst other things continually into close quarters with the question of the Trinity.

It was no academical question with these men. The future of Christianity, as well as their own personal destiny, was bound up with it. Their ranks, already thinned and dwindling, seemed to be threatened with fatal divisions about it. Could they reasonably pro-

fess the traditional dogma ? Or should they hold with Clarke to a ' Scriptural Trinity ' ; or again with Bidle and Socinus regard Christ as exalted by divine favour to share divine prerogatives ? Or—daring thought —should they, with one or two of the Unitarians of long ago, such as Francis Dávid, the Transylvanian, and Budny, the Pole, and in these last days with their own scholarly *Lardner*, think of their beloved Master as a true man among men, whose it was to draw men to their Father and his, and not to win for himself a worship due to the Father alone ? These were very serious alternatives. Then there was that other cardinal question of the Atonement. Were they to abide by the old substitutionary views, whether of Augustine, Anselm, or Calvin ; or hold with their contemporary, Dr. Taylor, of Norwich, that no ' reasonable Christianity ' could allow that a divine Father needed an infinite sacrifice to appease his wrath against sinners ?

That the discussion of these points was earnest, and, inside a limited circle, agitating, is evident. The limits of the circle were

partly due to social and political circumstances, and partly—it would appear—to a certain characteristic which has frequently, if not indeed generally, attached to Unitarians in this country. Their type of religious appeal has usually been such as to demand a more concentrated attention than most people seem able to give without a
29 sense of strain. Mosheim, the celebrated church historian, who flourished at that period, alludes to a tendency which he considered to differentiate the Unitarian and Socinian propaganda of the earlier half of the eighteenth century from all others. 'While most other sects,' he says, 'endeavour first to make friends among the common people, this sect which exalts reason alone, has the peculiarity that it does not much seek the favour and friendship of women, the illiterate, and persons of inferior rank, but labours to recommend itself specially to persons of high rank and eminent talents.' How far this will be conceded is another question; certainly some eminent people favoured the Movement here, and equally certainly, the great bulk of

the population had no interest in it. If, in an age when rationalism often took the shallowest forms, when 'enthusiasm' was a word of contempt implying mere groundless emotion, these Dissenting ministers were affected by the chilling influences of that unpoetic, unimaginative age, at least in preaching what were called 'moral' discourses they laid deep the foundations of a form of faith that has never been able to justify its existence apart from 'good works.'

'They were true priests,' says with pardonable rhetoric the son of one of that generation when the earlier Arianism developed into distinct Unitarianism. 'They set up an image in their own minds—it was truth; they worshipped an idol there—it was justice. They looked on man as their brother, and only bowed the knee to the highest. . . . They had Neal's History of the Puritans by heart, and Calamy's Account of the Two Thousand Ejected Ministers, and gave it to their children to read, with the pictures of the polemical Baxter, the silver-tongued Bates, the mild-looking Calamy, and old

honest Howe; they believed in Lardner's Credibility of the Gospel History; they were deep read in the works of the Fratres Poloni, Przipcovius, Crellius, ... who sought out truth in texts of Scripture, and grew blind over Hebrew points; their aspiration after liberty was a sigh uttered from the towers, "time-rent," of the Holy Inquisition—and their zeal for religious toleration was kindled at the fires of Smithfield. Their sympathy was not with the oppressors, but the oppressed. They cherished in their thoughts—and wished to transmit to their posterity—those rights and privileges for asserting which their ancestors had bled on scaffolds, or had pined in dungeons, or in foreign climes.'

So throughout England and Wales, where the descendants of the ejected Two Thousand stood out against all social and material disadvantages, worshipping like the Remonstrants of Holland in meeting-houses hidden away, and setting up their little
31 Academies to provide a learning denied them at the Universities, insecure of maintenance

and in general vexed with dwindling congregations, the British side of the Movement proceeded. In Ireland, where Presbyterianism was of the rigorous Scottish type, the struggle for free development was longer and sterner than in England. By a memorable decision arrived at by representative Dissenters in 1719 at Salters' Hall, in London, the principle of 'Non-Subscription' to non-biblical creeds was once for all boldly asserted; among those who adhered to it were Independents as well as English Presbyterians. The example was stimulating to the Irish pioneers of Free Christianity. They had good cause to be in earnest. *Thomas Emlyn*, [32] of Dublin, a minister of unblemished reputation, who learned heresy by studying Dr. Sherlock's defence of orthodoxy, was in 1703 sentenced to more than two years' imprisonment for publishing his views. After years of agitation in the northern province, the laymen chiefly (be it noted) carried in 1726 a resolution excluding Non-Subscribers from ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Hence, says Reid, [33] the historian of the Presbyterians of Ireland,

hence arose 'Independency,' and finally 'Unitarianism'; and he adds a warning therefore against relaxing the stringency of subscription. Since he wrote, about the middle of last century, the Calvinistic Presbyterians in Scotland and in North America have experienced many troubles in this connection, and in spite of stubborn resistance it would seem that freedom of religious thought is winning its way by degrees. Whether it will lead to 'Unitarianism,' as Reid prophesied, future history must tell.

We return to the name of *Joseph Priestley*, which I have ventured to place third to
34 those of Faustus Socinus and John Locke. If it be said there is a long interval between, no one can deny that the Unitarian Movement owes immensely to Priestley, while the debt of science is known far and wide. His opinions included some, both in science and theology, that no one holds to-day—e.g., his peculiar 'spiritual materialism,' if the phrase may be allowed. But he had all the sincerity and more than the ability of some who have been called apostles, and his

beautiful character entitles him to our reverence. His origin among the Independents recalls to mind the fact that that body contributed a memorable share to the ministry and laity of the eighteenth century Unitarianism. It was largely due to his earnest work as a writer, preacher, and correspondent, that ultimately a distinct group of churches stood out from the common ranks of Dissent, and avowed their Unitarian position. But we must remember that, at first, Priestley was against separation. The decisive step was really taken when *Theophilus Lindsey*, his friend, resolved to secede 35
from the Church of England—one of the few who were bold enough to abandon a clearly false position—and the step was indelibly marked in the history of the Movement by the opening in 1774 of a Church in Essex Street, London, where under the ministration of Lindsey worship should be given to the Father only. Priestley accepted the new departure, and laboured with rare devotion to extend its operations. There was a struggle here and there between Arians and

Humanitarians, and—as if to avenge the memory of Francis Dávid—some attempt was actually made to exclude from fellowship those who in any sense held the pre-existence of the Son. Happily the more inclusive spirit conquered. By the end of the eighteenth century practically all the congregations known as 'Presbyterian' were Arian or Unitarian, and a period of missionary zeal set in, giving rise to new congregations. Before we deal with further progress here, however, we must for the present look elsewhere.

(*c*) Priestley died in America, seeking asylum from the political as well as religious animosities from which he, like Socinus of old, was called upon to suffer. William Hazlitt, the father of the eloquent writer quoted above, had a hand in 'founding the First Unitarian Church' there, at the historic King's Chapel, Boston, though the New Eng-
36 land Protestants had discovered their own opening paths to Unitarianism before Hazlitt or Priestley visited them. And yet it is clear that English influence had a great share in the work. Their elder divines were

well acquainted with the writings of such men as Sherlock, Whiston, Clarke, and others already mentioned; and in particular the works of Emlyn, the Irish heretic, and of Chubb, the Deist, were much read and pondered. But probably the most decisive influence from this side was exerted by that work on 'Original Sin,' by Dr. Taylor, of Norwich, to which a passing reference has been made. In this book, which proved troublesome to Calvinists in many places for many years—especially when it apparently inspired Robert Burns to criticize 'Holy Willie' and his set—Dr. Taylor unwittingly prepared an antidote to the crude revivalistic doctrines preached in America by Whitefield in 1740 and 1744. No one book, says a competent authority, did so much towards rooting out the underlying ideas in the Westminster Standards. This authority is no less a man than the celebrated Jonathan Edwards, of predestination fame, who in 1757 replied to Taylor in a work intended to restore the pure doctrine of Calvinism to its pristine vigour. The upshot,

however, was that Edwards's own book helped to precipitate the very catastrophe he wished to avert. Joined with the reaction which usually follows a great 'revivalist' period, there occurred a powerful revulsion of feeling against his most uncompromising pictures of the orthodox faith. The way, indeed, had been long prepared. There had been observed in New England as early as 1719, 'an inclination to the abominable errors of Arius.' Arminian influences had done their work, and by 1750 some of the ministers were avowedly Unitarian.

It must be remembered that the original Church 'Covenants' of the Puritan settlers of the seventeenth century were simple, void of strict theological definitions, and explicitly pointing forward to growth in new truth. The congregations were of the Independent order, with a certain tendency to modification by grouping and mutual counsel. The ministers, like the laity, were often men of strong character and mental daring, and those of the eighteenth century were no less scholarly than their contemporaries in the

home country. When Whitefield in his wrath sought for fit terms to describe the New England clergy he said they were ' dumb dogs, half devils and half beasts, unconverted, spiritually blind, and leading their people to hell.' However that be, it is evident ministers and people were on their way to something very different from the Calvinism of their fathers. It is peculiarly significant, and introduces a class of facts that have deeply modified the conceptions of Unitarians generally, that at Salem on the New England coast the seamen who brought home news of the real worth and character of some of those non-Christian Asiatics with whom they traded, led the way towards those wider thoughts of the divine revelation and inspiration which are now inseparable from Unitarianism. Contact with the religions of Islam, the Hindu, the Buddhist, and the 37
Confucian, has assuredly brought a new light upon the ways of a Providence which was supposed to have left mankind, outside of Christianity, altogether benighted. Whatever other influences were at work, we can

only record here that by the end of the eighteenth century a very large number of the New England churches were Unitarian in sympathy, though owing to objection to some of the ideas then characteristic of the English Unitarians, and especially of Priestley himself, most of them declined the name. A few years later, when *William Ellery Channing* boldly espoused the cause of Unitarian Christianity, the objection waned, and by 1819 about one hundred and thirty churches in America were known to be Unitarian.

III. THE SECOND ADVANCE

We thus arrive, in the early decades of the nineteenth century, at a point when the pressing problem of church and missionary *organization* confronted Unitarians on both sides of the Atlantic. If thought must be free, and worshipful fellowship inclusive, how is truth to be diffused? May Unitarians unite for the spread of their own religious views, and if so under what name and on what terms? It is a problem still, though successive steps towards a practical solution

have in great degree removed the pressure. The student who follows the history of our 38
'central line' in England is soon made aware of differences of mood in regard to this question. The institution of a definitely 'Unitarian Church' was from the first alien from the ideals of the old 'Presbyterians,' and throughout the century the representatives of a 'Baxterian' catholicity have striven here against all tendencies, real or supposed, to narrow the bounds of religious sympathy, to fix a standard of dogma, or to establish a 'sect.' On the other hand, many of those in particular who have come into the Unitarian current from without, and who may be presumed to have a fresher, if not a deeper, sense of the value of the ideas they have come to espouse, have shown themselves less sensitive to dangers of the kind; hence since the days of Lindsey and Priestley there have always been signs of an earnest propagandist spirit at work, though subject to fluctuations of intensity.

Thus in 1791 a Unitarian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge was formed,

and fifteen years later a Unitarian Fund, under whose direction a zealous missionary, *Richard Wright*, went forth afoot for many years into all parts of Great Britain. He, like the first secretary of the Fund, *Robert Aspland*, was a General Baptist; and it is interesting here to note that the more orthodox section of the General Baptist body had seceded about 1770, forming a 'New Connexion.' The collateral developments which we have observed from time to time continued; and a striking permanent addition to the recognized Unitarian forces resulted from the expulsion for heresy (in 1806) of *Joseph Cooke*, a Lancashire Wesleyan, whose labours gave rise to several congregations which have maintained a vigorous life to the present day. A generation later another expulsion, from the Methodist New Connexion this time, brought *Joseph Barker* into the field, with a similar result. To mention only one other illustrative name, *George Harris*, one of the most eloquent preachers in Unitarian history, succeeded in planting other congregations

in the North of England and in Scotland.

Controversies resulting in notable literature if not always fruitful in producing congregations, have left a permanent mark in the annals of this period. Scotland, Ireland, England, in turn were the scenes of these memorable conflicts, the most famous being that whose monument is the substantial volume entitled 'Unitarianism Defended.' In this book (1839) we have the replies of three Liverpool ministers to the attacks of thirteen clergymen; the magnitude of the assaulting party would seem to indicate much alarm by this time in orthodox circles. Two of the 'defenders' became famous: *John Hamilton Thom*, one of the most prophetic and saintly of preachers, and *James Martineau*, the most brilliant writer, the most profound philosopher, and the most fruitful contributor to the devotional life of the Unitarians in the nineteenth century. It is instructive in many ways to contrast these controversial writings with those of *Thomas Belsham*, whose strong and masculine mind had produced the most serviceable defences of

Unitarianism in the first two decades of the century, and whose scholarly penetration made him a worthy pioneer in the fields of enlightened scripture criticism. Through his
39 pupil, Charles Wellbeloved, who became tutor at Manchester College (a lineal descendant of an 'Academy' founded by Richard Frankland in 1670), he laid a spiritual hand upon many a studious successor, and well merits his place in the line that led through such theologians as John Kenrick, John James Tayler, and James Martineau, to the scholars, still living, who have in various degrees shed lustre on their Alma Mater.

Another type of missionary effort, though in fact closely allied to the propagandist work referred to above, arose from the visit of *Joseph Tuckerman*, an American minister, who had already roused in his own country a warm enthusiasm for the religious elevation of the poorest and most degraded classes. Closely allied, I have said; for the missionaries sent out by the Unitarian Fund, and later by the Unitarian Association (formed in 1825 by amalgamating the Unit-

arian Society, the Unitarian Fund, and a Civil Rights Association founded in 1819) had always found their largest harvests in the labouring centres. But Tuckerman's ideal, the spirit of which has always been cherished in the work begun through his influence, was not to form 'Unitarian' congregations, or indeed congregations at all. He would have his missionaries visit the homes of the poor, and there in immediate contact with their daily life bring them religion's sympathetic help. Time has proved that while domestic visitation is an indispensable means of service in this branch of work, the poor also need their centres of social intercourse and common worship; but the 'Domestic Missions' which thus began in many large cities in the fourth decade of the nineteenth century, have always been sedulously guarded from 'denominationalism,' while in fact they have been almost wholly supported, managed, and served by Unitarians.

All the energy illustrated by these few details of a crowded period inevitably provoked opposition, especially on the part of

those Dissenters whose history had been closely intertwined with that of the 'English Presbyterians,' or Unitarians as they were now generally called. A point of sore dispute was the question of the right of Unitarians to hold the ancient chapels and burial-grounds, and to profit by the old endowments. As early as 1817 a legal attack was made on the holders of a meeting-house at Wolverhampton; other cases followed in a short time. In 1830 a much greater issue was raised. In the year 1705 a large fund had been established by Lady Hewley for the benefit of 'poor and godly ministers of Christ's holy gospel.' This fund, owing to gradual developments, was now in the administration of Unitarian trustees, and Unitarian ministers received its benefits. After twelve years of litigation the courts decided against the Unitarians. The Act of 1813, which repealed the disabilities imposed upon them under the Toleration Act of 1689 did not, and could not, it was held, enable any endowment made before 1813 to be legally applicable to Unitarian uses, or to any form

of worship which the law did 'not tolerate at the time of the endowment.'

The effect of this decision was to deprive anti-trinitarians of all the property derived from their forefathers for religious purposes —property which they had upheld and added to during many years. Reeling under the shock, some of the leaders, it is said, were actually driven to consider plans for wholesale emigration. Happily a young London solicitor, Edwin Wilkins Field (a 41
descendant of Oliver Cromwell) advised fighting it out in Parliament. Largely through his efforts, and with the aid of powerful influence in high places as well as the eloquence of that stalwart Churchman, Mr. W. E. Gladstone, an Act was passed, known as the *Dissenters' Chapels Act* (1844), the declared object of which was 'the full liberty of private judgment, unfettered by the accident of ancestral creeds, and protected from all inquisitorial interference.' Substantially the Act removed the disqualifications attaching to anti-trinitarian endowments prior to 1813, and provided that, where

specific doctrines are not embodied in the trust-deed of any chapel, it is at any time a sufficient title for the present holders if they can show that their doctrine is that which has been held during the previous twenty-five years.

Thus delivered from a most formidable peril, the English Unitarians—with chastened spirit, but resolute—entered upon a new era, marked by several prominent features. Among these was the rebuilding, often in a handsome form, of many of the old chapels. Another was the organization of local societies, assisting on the spot the work in general supported by the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, whose headquarters were in London. The large outlays thus involved were supplemented by conspicuous funds put in trust by munificent donors. Thus Christopher Rawdon established a Stipend Augmentation Fund (1856) to replace the lost Hewley Fund. Robert Hibbert, aiming at the diffusion of 'Christianity in its most simple and intelligible form,' left a large sum, available from 1853, which under

the unfettered management of the 'Hibbert Trustees' has provided scholarships, lectureships, professorships, and other aids to a learned ministry, and—without accepting responsibility for editorial or other opinions—has issued a most valuable series of volumes by leading scholars, and promoted in recent years the establishment of that very successful review, *The Hibbert Journal*. In Lancashire, a district long most favourable to Unitarian advance, a considerable number of new congregations were formed in the middle of the century, while others sprang up here and there in different parts of the country. A more significant development than these, and in part giving rise to them, was the foundation of a new college, the Unitarian Home Missionary Board, at Manchester (1854), where education was given to men who showed special aptitude for popular discourse and pastoral work among 'the people.' Since its foundation this institution has supplied a large number of ministers in whose work the missionary spirit has always been conspicuously dis-

played; and during the later decades the standard of scholarship attained by the students has been as high as that of the sister college which is now handsomely housed at Oxford.

A careful perusal of the hymnals and liturgies used at successive periods by the Unitarians would reveal much concerning their disposition and opinions. The fact
42 that these aids to devotion have been extremely numerous is itself characteristic, alike of the absence of 'authority' in their church life, and of their restless discontent with things already attained. In the earlier decades the only hymnal that approached at all to wide acceptance was that issued by Andrew Kippis and others in 1795. After 1840, when Dr. Martineau's 'Hymns for the Christian Church and Home' appeared, a more fervent spirituality began to displace the somewhat prim and placid type of devotion exhibited in the older books. The wide catholicity of Martineau's sympathies brought into Unitarian circles contributions from communions too long unfamiliar. At the

same time, 'for grave reasons of religious veracity,' the editor did not shrink from editing, if a good hymn could be saved at the price of a phrase. More significant alterations and omissions characterized the second great collection issued by him in 1873—'Hymns of Praise and Prayer.' The new hymns admitted belong (says the editor) 'chiefly to the poetry of the inner life; while the old hymns excluded mainly deal with objective incidents either in the Biblical history or in the apocalyptic representation of the future.' Other hymnals have to a large extent succeeded to the dominant place long enjoyed by Martineau's books, but the principles adopted by their respective editors have been clearly in harmony with his. The 'miraculous' is dropped; the 'official' position formerly assigned to Jesus Christ is minimized or wholly effaced; the bases of religious verity are sought in the experiences of the soul. To use the title of Dr. Martineau's own book, issued in his marvellous old age, 'The Seat of Authority' is no longer sought by Unitarians without—whether in

a book, a church, or an historical character—but within, where the moral conflict attests a Righteousness Eternal, and where the 'love, joy, peace' which are the 'fruit of the spirit' bear witness to the indwelling God.

The position of thought and feeling thus indicated was not reached without a struggle; though it must seem strange to Unitarians of the younger generation, accustomed to the universal plaudits given to Dr. Martineau as a defender of spiritual philosophy against
43 the materialism of the early 'evolutionists,' to be told that he was once looked upon as 'dangerous.' Those to whom the old 'Scriptural Unitarianism' was dear, and who therefore resisted his innovations, were, however, generally much more liberal in their tone than has been supposed; and though men like William Johnson Fox, who was renowned upon the political platform as well as in the pulpit, suffered the penalty of being a generation in advance in casting off the 'supernatural,' the process of growth was really more regular and free from catastrophe than might be thought.

In one important matter Dr. Martineau sorrowfully confessed himself beaten. He was one of those who deprecated the attachment of the term 'Unitarian' to religious fellowship; and in 1867, along with *John James Tayler*, he sought to promote a 'Free Christian Union' in which Unitarian and Trinitarian should forget their differences of theory, and combine in those aspirations and duties which are common to all Christians. This Union, though attracting some notable individuals, failed to win large support—very few non-Unitarians welcomed it; and the term 'Christian' was regarded by some, notably Francis William Newman, as distinctly narrowing the limits of religious fellowship. In 1870 it was dissolved. Another effort, on different lines, was made when the octogenarian philosopher gave a famous address at the Leeds 'Conference' (1888). This meeting was the third of a series of triennial gatherings, inaugurated (1882) by the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, for purposes of consultation and mutual encouragement. The Conference had already

resulted in the rise of another great fund—the Sustentation Fund—in aid of ministerial stipends. Prior to the Leeds meeting Dr. Martineau issued a scheme for closer organization of the three hundred and upwards of scattered churches in the United Kingdom. There would be a sort of Presbyterian government, with a regular financial levy on the congregations, and a minimum stipend guaranteed to the ministers. The Conference was 'polyonymous,' being composed of members of 'Unitarian, Liberal Christian, Free Christian, Presbyterian, and other Non-Subscribing and Kindred Congregations.' The very title is a chapter of history. Under the new scheme it would be reduced simply to 'English Presbyterian.' After much discussion the scheme failed to win sufficient adhesion to be a practical policy. Some changes have since been made, not without friction, in the constitution of the Conference itself; at present it would appear that the machinery of the 'denomination' is regarded as practically sufficient, were the working power itself adequate.

In the American ' central line ' history has taken in the nineteenth century a path curiously similar to that in England, though with important variations. Thus there was a keenly controversial period—which need 44
not be detailed here—followed by a lull; then came developments of a social and philanthropic kind, a significant change of theological emphasis, and a steady if slow expansion of organized church life, with the founding of colleges, trusts, and funds, as in England. There was even a legal battle similar to those waged in England. In 1820 the Supreme Court of Massachusetts decided that ' when the majority of the members of a congregational church shall separate from the majority of the parish, the members who remain, although a minority, constitute the church in such parish, and retain the rights and property belonging thereto.' The equity of this decision, apart from the law, which lawyers must decide, seems to rest on the matter of the ' majority of the parish,' i.e., the bulk of the population in the community, whether formally ' members ' of the church

or not. However that be, the upshot was to leave the Unitarian Congregationals in possession of many of the finest positions in the New England States. Dr. Lyman Beecher said (1823) that 'All the literary men of Massachusetts were Unitarian, all the trustees and professors of Harvard College were Unitarian, all the *élite* of wealth and fashion crowded Unitarian churches'—and he went on to say the judges were Unitarian and hence, presumably, gave the decision in this 'Dedham Case.'

The decision, however gratifying to the successful side, naturally widened the breach of sympathy between heterodox and orthodox, and very reluctantly the Unitarians had to accept separation—how reluctantly the life and letters of Dr. Channing bear witness. This great and good man, whose Christian devotion, clear intelligence, and unceasing benevolence rendered him worthy to hold a supreme place in the records of Unitarianism, was intensely earnest in deprecating every symptom of sectarianism. Without a Richard Baxter to quote, he and

the other American liberals had their own passion for liberty in a common fellowship; and in each generation there have been many of them who, with the typical 'English Presbyterian,' disliked everything that looked like proselytism. Again, there have been those who have been very jealous for the truth, and untiringly earnest to spread it. As in England, the two elements have compounded into a resultant force, not too violently propagandist nor too stubbornly inactive. As if to preserve these New England favourites of fortune from taking too much 'ease in Zion' there have been, happily, many beneficent intrusions. The vehemence of the orthodox recoil was itself one. A 'Brimstone Corner' church was set up in Boston, where the old 'gospel' in rudest strength defied the gentler views then held by the majority of Bostonians, and put them to the test. Then, from within their own circle, came the persuasive appeal of Joseph Tuckerman, on behalf of the depraved multitudes already thronging the haunts of the Pilgrim Fathers. His influence, said Dr.

Channing, was like that of an angel troubling the waters. The Unitarians felt it, and woke to many a benevolent enterprise. By and by, in 1838, one of the host of brilliant men and women whose names adorn American Unitarian history, the young *Ralph Waldo Emerson*, with an amazing effect, gave his Divinity School Address at Harvard College, with one subtle blow shivering the old idols, so dear and beloved, of the 'supernaturalists' who then ruled opinion among the Unitarians. The peculiar difficulty was that Emerson wrought not by logic, nor by appeal to critical analysis of the old writings, but by the introduction of a new way of regarding all life and experience. Even *Theodore Parker*, then a young man under thirty, but already a giant of learning and a preacher of formidable promise, could say at that time, 'I believe that Jesus, like other religious teachers, wrought miracles.' But the conceptions of nature, the soul, and God, carried far and wide by the winged words of the mystical—and yet shrewdly sensible—genius of Emerson, soon began to render obsolete the

discussion of 'natural' and 'supernatural.' Parker himself was to prove, perhaps, the most startling of all the beneficial troublers of the Bostonian Israel.

In this rugged orator, whom multitudes gathered to hear, the 'Unitarian Movement' now recognizes one of its greatest promoters; but the majority of Unitarians of his day considered him beyond the pale. This was due in great part, as in the case of *William Johnson Fox* in England, to the greater swiftness with which he had responded to the moulding forces that operated through the new learning of his time. Steeped in the most scholarly theology of Europe, a student of science and history, and above all an ardent sympathizer with the humanitarian enthusiasm which from the time of the French Revolution swept with successive waves from land to land, Theodore Parker could not be confined by the old limits of thought. The Jewish and Christian tradition, then undergoing severest analysis by the critics, had, for him, to take its place among the many religious developments of different ages and

races. The new conceptions of natural order prevailed against the most august claims to special divine interposition. The Bible became literature ; the founder of Christendom one of many prophets—doubtless highest, yet not of essentially different nature from the rest. It was not that Parker, and those who came to share his thoughts, ' believed ' less in God, in Jesus, in inspiration, salvation, and immortality. His affirmations were whole-hearted, his faith superb. But he exposed and broke down the scaffolding of ecclesiastical assumptions within which the great moral and spiritual ideas of Christian theism had been upreared ; and then, as ever, there were many who thought such work mere iconoclasm and destruction. Others, who judged more seriously, deprecated the insufficient sympathy with distinctive Christian conceptions betrayed by Parker and some of those who came to share his views ; and it would be a great mistake to suppose that the Unitarianism of the half-century since Parker's death has not sought a *via media* between an ' official Christianity '

of the old type, and a bare rationalistic theism. This problem of thought still occupies, as it deserves, a considerable share of attention in both branches of the English-speaking Unitarians.

I have somewhat enlarged upon this particular point because at one time it looked like marking a decisive split in the American Unitarian body. The adherents of the older school ranged themselves under the honoured name of Channing. A similar movement showed itself in England also. But common work, the mutual esteem of leading spirits in both camps, and, shall we not add, the underlying sense that they whose liberties had been won at so great a price must not fetter the liberties of others, preserved a general unity. The American Unitarian Association, founded by accident on or about the same day in 1825 as the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, gradually came to be looked upon as the instrument of common and ever-growing missionary activity. The Civil War of 1861–5 inevitably absorbed much of the available strength and resources of its time ;

but in 1865 a Unitarian 'National Conference' was founded, which indeed suggested the Conference founded in England seventeen years later. A difficulty like that experienced in Dr. Martineau's 'Free Christian Union' arose earlier at the Syracuse meeting of this Conference in 1866. Should it be by title limited to 'Christians'? Might not liberal Jews, for instance, come into the fellowship? The champion of the 'Christian' title was *James Freeman Clarke*, a man of the widest religious sympathies, but deeply attached to the memory of Jesus and to what he conceived to be the essentials of the Christian tradition. The decision was in favour of a continued connection with historic Christianity. But the question was again raised in 1886 at the 'Western Conference,' of which Chicago was the headquarters, and was solved, temporarily, by the adoption of a declaration to the effect that the common aim and purpose of the Conference was to 'promulgate a religion in harmony with' the preamble, wherein reference was made to 'pure Christianity.' A revised preamble in

1892 dispensed with this phrase. Ultimately, the following statement was made at the National Conference at Saratoga, 1894, and it may be taken as practically embodying the spirit of Unitarians on both sides of the Atlantic: 'These churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding in accordance with his teaching that practical religion is summed up in love to God, and love to man; and we invite to our fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims.'

IV. PRESENT POSITION

Thus from the opening decades of the nineteenth century the Unitarian Movement in the great English-speaking nations has undoubtedly increased in volume, and as certainly in contents. In estimating the volume we have now, as always in its history, to distinguish between what is overt and organized, and what is to be found at work within the ostensibly orthodox communions. Compared with any other period since the promulgation of the Athanasian dogma as

the one and only true creed of Christendom there never was an age when Christianity was so permeated with heterodoxy as ours. The feeling of men everywhere is that it is dangerous, if not absolutely fatal, to the gospel of Christ to ally it inseparably to a group of abstruse metaphysical notions, and to declare the acceptance of these to be the only basis of religious fellowship and the only way to salvation; and we may say of many that, if not 'anti-trinitarian' they are 'extra-trinitarian.' Sooner or later this feeling, along with the nobler conceptions of justice and humanity that cannot but modify men's theology while changing their social and political ideals, must lead to a very great reconstruction of the theory of the Church. Already the closer affiliation of many sects and the broader charity of all gives warrant of still greater things to come. But obviously these are matters beyond precise calculation.

We have figures as to the organized forms of the Movement, and they forbid alike extravagant hopes and fears. The rate of progress has at times been very slow in what

I have called the central line of the Movement—the stratum in which it might perhaps be suggested, without offence, the most characteristic 'fossils' are to be found. But to use the words of Dryden (who would be shocked, I am sure, to hear them applied to Unitarian churches), they have been often 'doomed to death, yet fated not to die.' The United Kingdom claims three hundred 45
and seventy-two congregations this year, a growth of about thirty-three per cent in the past half-century. In North America the rate is higher, the numbers having doubled in the same time; there are now nearly five hundred. Notable additions, however, must be made for that part of the world, by the inclusion of two bodies at least that have definitely broken with the Trinitarian creed, while they have pursued their own course of development apart from the recognized American Unitarians. The Universalists come first; their separate movement dates from the preaching of John Murray, about 1770. Elhanan Winchester founded the Universalist Church in Philadelphia in 1781;

but the cause received its decisive impetus from Hosea Ballou in 1790. There are now some nine hundred congregations. The Unitarian Quakers, secondly, follow the lead set by Elias Hicks in 1827, and now number about twenty-five thousand members.

Beside these, there are in North America at least three anti-sectarian bodies in which the rule of the sufficiency of Scripture is followed, with a protest against all non-biblical creeds. In one of these, The Christians—who date their beginnings from secessions respectively from the Methodists (1793), the Baptists (1800), and the Presbyterians (1801)—Anti-trinitarians and Trinitarians dwell together in unity; it is believed that the former are much the more numerous. The two others—The Disciples of Christ, and the Christian Union—retain in general the evangelical doctrine, but are at one with Unitarians in breadth of fellowship. The estimated numbers are: Christians, about one hundred and twenty thousand; Disciples, about three-quarters of a million; Christian Union, about two hundred thousand. There

are certainly representatives of this type in Great Britain and the Colonies; but obviously the lines are not to be drawn with precision in this varied field of religious activity.

The Transylvanian Unitarians, who endured great losses in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, were threatened with practical extinction by the government in the middle of last century; but an appeal to England and America brought financial aid and enabled them to maintain their institutions. Since that crisis they have made considerable progress; their long-prevalent Socinian ideas have been modified by contact with the writings of Emerson, Martineau, and others, and their numbers are increasing. The present total is about eighty thousand, and they have the benefits of a Bishop, along with state-aid.

In other countries, Unitarians generally live and work in enjoyment of the liberty, or in defiance of the bonds, of such religious communities as the respective States possess. In Switzerland the degree of freedom is practically complete and their numbers are

substantial. In France the proportion of Protestants in sympathy with Unitarian ideas is not so large, and the struggle for free development has been at times severe. Arianized opinion was prevalent among them before the close of the eighteenth century; and nineteenth century Unitarianism has found in the French group a number of its foremost scholars and thinkers, e.g., the Coquerels, the Révilles, the late Baron de Schickler, a munificent philanthropist and an accomplished historian, and Prof. Bonet-Maury, whose book on the 'Early Sources of English Unitarianism' is one of the most valuable works on the subject.

In Holland, besides the Unitarians included among the Remonstrants and the Mennonite Baptists, there are many 'Moderns' in the old State Church, whose radical theology is very far indeed from State Church orthodoxy. On the whole the Unitarian forces in Holland appear to be comparatively massive, and capable of great things in the future. There are three hundred liberal ministers in this small country.

Far less prominent are the representatives of the Movement in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden; but sanguine estimates are repeatedly made as to the real trend of thought in these countries also. Even in Russia there appear to be many who accept, in the main, the simple type of Christian teaching set forth by Tolstoy, which is notoriously opposed to the official creeds.

Perhaps the most interesting position, and one most pregnant, is that presented in Germany. It is true that the organized liberal Christianity of that country, considerable as it is in bulk, and still more in *personnel*, is not very large in proportion to the population; but for many generations there has been in progress such a weighty and continuous departure from the orthodox standards that the effects, however long delayed, cannot but be ultimately very striking. The whole development of religious thought in the land of Luther is profoundly significant. The 'Pietism' of the seventeenth century was succeeded by a period of Rationalist Freethinking (*Auf-*

klärung) of the most candidly destructive type. Before the close of the eighteenth century, however, the serious German mind produced not only a fresh manifestation on Pietistic lines, but also a new school of sympathetic study both of the Bible and of religious history, which has greatly influenced the whole Christian world. This subject is, of course, matter for special and extended treatment; but no estimate of the Unitarian Movement in its wider sense can overlook the importance of that long and brilliant series of writers, amongst whose varieties there are doubtless mistaken extremes, but whose total effect is in favour of a simpler Christianity. Their critical science has overthrown, one would think for ever, the Bastilles of authority within which the minds of men have been in the past so disastrously imprisoned. The emergent positive teachings now being popularized by a very remarkable literary activity, are wholly in accord with the general convictions of Unitarians in Great Britain and America, who, indeed, owe immensely to the instruction and inspiration

derived for many years from the great school of writers to whom I have referred. The closeness of their affinity to the English and American type will doubtless become more apparent to the world after the great Congress of Liberal Christianity to be held in Berlin. The influence of the large number of liberal theologians who hold professorships at the numerous universities must be very great in preparing for the gradual transformation of doctrine in the churches. Even in the colleges of Italy liberal professors are to be found; and without committing ourselves on the ambiguous phenomena of 'Modernism,' we must not fail to note that the Abbé Houtin declares that among those who nominally adhere to Roman Catholicism, but who really repudiate its creeds, there are many who are in sympathy with Unitarian thought.

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Thus in all the greater homes of Christian life and vigour this Movement is making itself variously evident. Its mobility has permitted of more or less swift adjustment

to the successive verdicts of philosophy—it is rigorously bound to no scholastic system ; and even now what was essential in Priestley's necessarianism finds its modern analogues existing contemporaneously, if not quite side by side, with Martineau's libertarianism. The scripturalism, and reliance upon miracle, that generally characterized the earlier stages, are not wholly given up even in what I have called the 'central line'; the collateral branches appear to vary in this respect still more. But there is unanimity in the verdict passed on the theories and pretensions of the official 'Church.' However splendid that Church's services to humanity—and they were splendid—the new science, history, feeling, of our age can only regard those theories as mistaken and those pretensions as anachronisms. Few as the numbers of its professed adherents hitherto, the Unitarian Movement has made, and still is making, its mark upon the world. The records of public service, the rich literature of devotion, and the peculiarly elevated and abundant hymnology of Unitarians, plead against any

judgment that here is but a freak of intellectualism, or at best an insignificant vagary in the field of religious life. It has, not unfruitfully, filled a worthy place in modern Christian development; insisting on the rights of reason, recognizing few essentials, emphasizing uprightness and Christ-like benevolence, and reverently trusting the perfect goodness of God. Its protest was necessary, and has not been in vain; its protest is necessary still, and will be so long as precise intellectual agreement is insisted upon as the basis of Christian fellowship, and acquiescence in subtle philosophizing takes precedence of a life after the mind of Christ.

But the Unitarian Movement is not a mere 47
revolt, and they serve it very poorly who insist chiefly on its denials. Great challenges greet its emergence from the shades of universal obloquy into the open daylight where it receives a recognition, at least clear, if still cold. Will this Movement lead to a truly Catholic Christianity free from dogmatic compulsion, and allied not to imperialism (as the old despotic Catholicism

was), but to an enlightened democracy? Has its necessary and continued activity in criticism absorbed a disproportionate amount of its spiritual energy? Does it possess the poetic and emotional material that will render it widely serviceable to the needs of the mass of mankind? Face to face with non-Christian theisms, such as the Jewish, Mohammedan, and Hindu, especially in their 'reformed' types, has it a distinctive Christian note to offer them, while it welcomes them fraternally? Such are among the questions that press very seriously for an answer. A century ago the English Unitarians were boundlessly sanguine in their expectations. The years have brought disappointments, but also more solid reasons for hope. Much for which the earlier Unitarians longed and strove has come to pass. In the Protestant world, at any rate, ample latitude is allowed to earnest thought, and theologians of very different schools meet for conference in mutual respect. But here is the actual world of men, sinning and suffering, and drifting for the most part upon a wide sea of

indifference—a situation calling for a new apostleship and a living gospel. The signs of the times, the breaking down of 'Confessional' standards, the new 'orthodoxies' that always look so heterodox to the old orthodoxy, the constantly increasing liberalism of all the Churches, show that the opportunities and possibilities of the Unitarian Movement are enormous, if it is wise enough to be lowly and diligent, and still receptive to the great inspirations of the age.

NOTES

1. (p. 1). The following works will suffice for ordinary reference; for earlier books and documents see especially the treatises by *Gordon*, *Bonet-Maury*, and *Wallace*.

Anti-trinitarian Biography. R. Wallace. 3 vols. London, 1850. The first vol. contains a history up to the end of the seventeenth century.

Early Sources of English Unitarianism. G. Bonet-Maury (tr. E. P. Hall). 1 vol. London, 1884.

Heads of English Unitarian History. A. Gordon. 1 vol. London, 1895.

See also articles by Gordon on Servetus (*Theological Review*, April, 1878); The Sozzini and their School (*Theol. Rev.*, July and October, 1879); and biographical sketches in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

History of Dissenting Churches, etc. Wilson. 4 vols. London, 1814.

Unitarianism Since the Reformation. J. H. Allen. 1 vol. New York, 1894.

Unitarianism, its Origin and History. Various writers. 1 vol. Boston, 1890.

Short History of Unitarianism. F. B. Mott. 1 vol. Boston, 1893. (Gives a lengthy bibliography.)

Unitarianism, article in *Encycl. Brit.* (9th ed.). J. F. Smith. (Gives authorities.)

Religious Thought in England. J. Hunt. 3 vols. London, 1870–73.

Retrospect of the Religious Life of England. J. J. Tayler. 1 vol. London (3rd ed.), 1876.

2. (p. 2). Congresses attended by delegates representing many countries and denominational groups have been held as follows :—London, 1901 ; Amsterdam, 1903 ; Geneva, 1905 ; Boston, U.S.A., 1907 ; Berlin, 1910. Volumes containing proceedings and papers have been issued in connection with the first four ; where they are relied upon as authorities in this Lecture they are referred to below by the place and date only. The full titles are—

Liberal Religious Thought at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century. Ed. by W. Copeland Bowie. London, 1901.

Religion and Liberty. Ed. by P. H. Hugenholtz, jun. Leyden, 1904.

Actes du IIIme Congrès International du Christianisme Libéral et Progressif. Ed. by E. Montet. Geneva, 1906.

Freedom and Fellowship in Religion. Ed. by C. W. Wendté. Boston, 1907.

A similar Congress for Americans of different religious groups was held at Philadelphia, 1909. Its proceedings are contained in the volume, *The Unity of the Spirit.* Ed. by C. W. Wendté. Boston, 1909.

3. (p. 6). *Baronius* [Ann. 1176]. See *Mansi,* vol. xxii. 157 f. Albert Réville, in his *History of the Dogma of the Deity of Jesus Christ,* London, 1905 (translated from the Third French Edition of 1904), denies that the Waldenses carried their heresies so far. So Harnack (*Hist. Dogma* vi. 90 n.). It was the Cathari, among the Albigenses, according to Réville, who were conspicuously Arian. His book may be warmly com-

mended as a succinct presentation of the theological story from earliest times.

4. (p. 8). For the *Mennonites* see Fleischer's papers in '*London*, 1901,' p. 208 f.; and '*Boston*, 1907,' p. 398 f.

5. (p. 9). A. Gordon (*The Sozzini and their School*) *Theol. Rev.*, July, 1879, pp. 300–304, demolishes the 'myth of the Vicenza Society.' The Italians held intercourse less formally, no doubt, than the Socinian historians came to imagine; and Gordon's own statement is 'To find the incipient traces of concerted action for the development of heresy, we must pass beyond Italy altogether.'

6. (p. 12). For Poland and the 'Catechism' see Rees's translation, with historical introduction. 1 vol. London, 1818.

7. (p. 15). 'Miguel Serveto-y-Revés.' A. Gordon. *Theol. Rev.*, April, 1878, p. 281 f.

8. (p. 16). For a sketch of the Transylvanians, past and to date, see J. J. Tayler's article in *Theol. Rev.*, January, 1869. See also G. Boros, '*Geneva*, 1905,' and N. Jozan, '*Boston*, 1907.'

9. (p. 18). See King's *Life and Letters of John Locke*; especially Le Clerc's testimony (p. 271 f., Bohn's Edition) and the paper on 'Pacific Christians' drawn up by Locke in 1688 (p. 276 f.).

10. (p. 20). Allen, *ut supra*, p. 122. The Journals of the House of Lords give no details of the voting.

11. (p. 21). *Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum.* 8 vols. fol. Amsterdam, 1666. A supplementary vol. was issued in 1692.

12. (p. 23). *Brandt* I, XVI.

13. (p. 24). *Wallace* II, 43 f. See also II, 245.

14. (p. 26). See Dr. Martineau's Preface to Bonet-Maury's *Early Sources*.

15. (p. 27). See Tulloch's *Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the Seventeenth Century*. Vol. I.

16. (p. 29). Wallace, II, 444.

17. (p. 31). For the Remonstrants, see H. Y. Groenewegen, '*Boston*, 1907,' p. 390 f. Also P. H. Wicksteed, *The Ecclesiastical Institutions of Holland*, London, 1875; and J. J. Tayler, *Theol. Rev.*, January, 1868.

18. (p. 32). See Hunt II, xi; and Mark Pattison's 'Tendencies,' etc., in *Essays and Reviews*, 1860. The claims of Thomas Morgan and John Toland as pioneers in New Testament criticism are set forth in an article by D. Patrick in *Theol. Rev.*, October, 1877.

19. (p. 33). See Wallace; and Gordon's *Heads of Unitarian History*.

20. (p. 35). The contents of the 'Unitarian Tracts' are detailed in Hunt II., 273.

21. (p. 36). Turretini repudiated the suggestion that to relax subscription would encourage Socinianism. See S. Chandler's *The Case of Subscription*, etc. (1748), p. 172.

22. (p. 38). See the *Christ-lutherische Vorstellung*, Wittenberg, 1695, and the *Antwort*, 1696. Statements differ as to the number of condemned opinions; actual count is my authority.

23. (p. 38). In the 1710 English translation of the *Historical and Critical Dictionary, by Monsieur Bayle*

(Art. 'Socinus,' Vol. IV, 2756) the passage is thus rendered :—'His sect was so far from dying with him, that it is very much increased; but since it was expelled from Poland in 1658 it is very much decayed in its visible state. I express myself so, because most people are persuaded that it has made an invisible progress, and grows daily more numerous; and 'tis thought, considering the present state of things, that Europe would be amazed to appear Socinian in a little time, if Potent Princes made a publick profession of that heresy, or only ordered that those, who profess it, should enjoy the same advantages as others do. 'Tis the opinion of many people, which makes them uneasie.'

24. (p. 39). For the hardships of Unitarian sympathizers in the last two Stuart reigns see Lecky's *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, I, chap. 2.

25. (p. 40). See the articles in Wallace, Vol. III; and Milton's *Treatise on Christian Doctrine.* The sections on 'The Son of God' and 'The Holy Spirit' have been republished (intro. by A. Gordon) by the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, 1 vol., 1908.

26. (p. 41). Hunt (Vol. II) gives a full account of this controversy.

27. (p. 45). Lecky's *Rise and Influence of Rationalism in Europe.* Vol. I.

28. (p. 47). See Arts. in *Dict. Nat. Biog.*—Whiston (Leslie Stephen), Clarke (L. Stephen), Lardner and Taylor (A. Gordon).

29. (p. 50). See Mosheim. Bk. IV, ii. vii.

30. (p. 51). See W. Hazlitt's *Works* (12 vols. Ed.

by W. E. Henley), vol. iii. pp. 265, 266. The extract is from a 'Political Essay' on 'Court Influence,' which was written Jan., 1818. Hazlitt was then living in Milton's house (since pulled down) in York Street, Westminster; his editor suggests that the associations of the spot may have moved him to this outburst, the conclusion of which is worth quoting—(the author's reputation will be none the worse; Charles Lamb, at any rate, said he thought him to be, 'in his natural and healthy state, one of the wisest and finest spirits breathing.') Hazlitt, reflecting in his own way, the temper of 'the Presbyterian Divines of the old school,' (note the 'apart and content,' in the closing lines), proceeds thus after the passage given in the text:—

'Their creed too was "Glory to God, peace on earth, good will to man." This creed, since profaned and rendered vile, they kept fast through good report and evil report. This belief they had, that looks at something out of itself, fixed as the stars, deep as the firmament; that makes of its own heart an altar to truth, a place of worship for what is right, at which it does reverence with praise and prayer as a holy thing, apart and content; that feels that the greatest being in the universe is always near it, and that all things work together for the good of his creatures, under his guiding hand.'

The passage as printed in Hazlitt's works contains the name 'Cracovius,' after Crellius; but this is a mistake; no such writer is to be found in the long list of anti-trinitarians. His 'Pripscovius' is also wrong.

31. (p. 52). An account of the Academies is given in the volume published by the late R. D. Darbishire on the occasion of the settlement of Manchester New College at Oxford, entitled *Theology and Piety alike Free.* London, 1890. See especially the Rev. A. Gordon's speech, p. 249 f.

32. (p. 53). See *Dict. Nat. Biog.* (A. Gordon) ; and Wallace, III.

33. (p. 53). *History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland,* by J. S. Reid (continuation by W. D. Killen). 3 vols. London, 1853. See III, 248.

34. (p. 54). See A. Gordon's lecture on Priestley in *Heads of Unitarian History* (p. 102 f.). Also the vol. on *The Priestley Memorial at Birmingham.* B.& F.U.A., 1875.

35. (p. 55). See *Memoirs of . . . Theophilus Lindsey* etc., by T. Belsham, 1812. Reprinted as a Centenary volume, London, 1873. It contains much important history of the Movement in Lindsey's lifetime on both sides of the Atlantic.

36. (p. 56). See for details of the American development Allen's *Unitarianism since the Reformation,* chaps. viii. and ix.

37. (p. 59). The visit of Rajah Rammohun Roy had considerable effect similarly in England, in 1831–33. Principal Gordon has pointed out that the first use of the term ' Unitarian ' in an English document was made by ' two philosophers ' (anonymous) who in 1682 offered an address to the ambassador from Morocco to London. (*Heads of Unitarian History,* p. 22.)

38. (p. 61). See. e.g., the Letters on 'The Unitarian Position,' and 'Church-Life? or Sect-Life?' in Dr. Martineau's *Essays*, Vol. II, pp. 371–420; also J. E. Carpenter's Life of *James Martineau*, chapter vii.

39. (p. 64). See the vol. *Theology and Piety alike Free* referred to in Note 31.

40. (p. 65). The original idea and the change in Domestic Mission work are illustrated in the book, *William Rathbone, A Memoir*, London, 1905, pp. 69, 70; 435 f.; 448–449. This biography as a whole is typical of intelligent and practical Unitarian philanthropy in the nineteenth century.

41. (p. 67). See *Edwin Wilkins Field*, by Dr. T. Sadler, London, 1872; also *Dict. Nat. Biog.* art. by A. Gordon. The latter shows that Field had much influence in securing an open character for the Hibbert Trust. See also Carpenter's *Martineau*, chapter vii.

42. (p. 70). The Rev. V. D. Davis supplies a valuable account of 'Unitarian Hymnody' to Julian's *Dictionary of Hymnology*, 1892. It is noteworthy that in *The Treasury of Hymns* (London, 1896), edited by W. Garrett Horder for general use, out of four hundred and thirty authors represented about sixty are of the Unitarian group.

43. (p. 72). John James Tayler, who preceded Dr. Martineau in the principalship of Manchester New College, was included in the suspicions, not to say hostility, that Martineau had to endure. See Dr. Drummond's *Life and Letters of James Martineau*, I, p. 296 f. The story of the 'Free Christian Union' is also

given in this book, as well as details of the 'Conference' discussion.

44. (p. 75). See Allen's *Unitarianism*, etc., and the volume of lectures, *Unitarianism, its Origin and History*, mentioned in Note 1.

45. (p. 85). See the *Essex Hall Year Book* (London), and the *Unitarian Year Book* (Boston). See also *A Study of the Sects*, W. H. Lyon (Boston).

For the Transylvanians see Note 8.

General statements as to the position in Switzerland, France, Holland, Scandinavia, Italy, Germany, Australasia, etc., are given in the Congress vols. named above.

46. (p. 91). The Congress was held Aug. 5–10, 1910, with over 2000 members, including many of the leading scholars of Germany. Their sympathy with the Unitarian position was undisguised. A record is to be published in due course.

47. (p. 93). See 'The Tendency of Positive Religions to Universal Religion.' Prof. Otto Pfleiderer, '*Boston*, 1907.'

'What does Free Christianity require to become Victorious?' Prof. Rudolf Eucken, '*Boston*, 1907.'

Presidential Address, 'The Liberal Faith.' Dr. J. Estlin Carpenter, '*London*, 1901.'

'The Religion of the Future'—a Lecture by Dr. Charles W. Eliot, ex-President of Harvard University, 1909. (Essex Hall.)

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